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**TO:** Paul Thompson  
Manager of Long Range Planning

**DATE:** May 2, 2008

**FROM:** Greg Keller  
Senior Planner

**FILE:** 1855 03 2008

**SUBJECT: Built Environment and Active Transportation Community Planning Grant**

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## PURPOSE

To receive information on the Built Environment and Active Transportation Community Planning Grant Program and consider a resolution in support of submitting an expression of interest to apply for funding to develop an active transportation plan as part of the Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan review.

## BACKGROUND

In January 2008 the Built Environment and Active Transportation (BEAT) initiative was launched as part of the provincial Physical Activity Strategy developed by the British Columbia Healthy Living Alliance. The purpose of the initiative is to reduce chronic disease in the province by decreasing the proportion of inactive adults aged 35-54 years old in British Columbia by 20%.

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is leading the implementation of the Physical Activity strategy in partnership with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), which is responsible for the administration of the associated community planning grants.

Municipalities and Regional Districts in British Columbia are eligible to apply for a community planning grant to assist in the development of new active transportation plans or the revision of existing transportation plans. During phase 1 of the grant program, a total of 10 grants of \$15,000 to \$25,000 are available. The grant funds do not require any matching funds or cost sharing. There is also a phase 2 which offers the same value and number of grants scheduled for the spring of 2009.

In the context of this initiative, Active Transportation includes human-powered forms of travel such as walking, cycling, jogging/running, rollerblading, in-line and ice skating, skateboarding, use of a wheelchair or scooter, cross-country skiing, canoeing and kayaking.

Grants are available for planning activities and can be used for community consultation, various kinds of assessments, developing new plans, updating existing plans, and hiring consultants to assist in the process.

To apply, interested Local Governments must submit an expression of interest not more than 2 pages in length outlining the project and the process of developing an active transportation plan. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal for consideration.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff have reviewed the grant application guide and have drafted an expression of interest (included as Attachment No. 1) that proposes to develop an active transportation plan as part of the Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan review. This would include conducting an assessment of the existing active transportation infrastructure in the Plan Area, providing opportunities for the community to discuss transportation issues and opportunities, the formation of an Active Transportation Advisory Group to provide technical expertise and different perspectives on the plan. Finally a draft plan would be developed and reviewed by the Advisory Group and presented to the community.

Once the Plan is completed, it is anticipated that it would become part of the new Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan and could include design guidelines, policies, and an implementation strategy.

Funding would primarily be used for hiring a consultant to conduct the assessment, lead the public process, and prepare the final report.

If approved, it would allow for a more detailed review of transportation issues than what would otherwise be possible with current staff and resource levels.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. To receive this Report and attached expression of interest as information and to direct staff to proceed by submitting the attached expression of interest to UBCM for consideration.
2. To receive this Report and attached expression of interest as information and to provide staff with further direction.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

If the Board supports Alternative 1 to submit an expression of interest, the anticipated budget for this project, not including in-kind Regional District of Nanaimo staff time contributions, is \$25,000. Funding would be used to hire a consultant to assist in the plan process and development as well as to fund the costs associated with the process such as meeting expenses and advertising.

## **VOTING**

All Directors – one vote.

## **CONCLUSION**

Grant funding in an amount of up to \$25,000 is available to assist the Regional District of Nanaimo Planning Department in developing an active transportation plan as part of the Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan review. Staff are proposing to submit an expression of interest to the UBCM for funding, which is aimed at hiring and covering other process-related costs.

Staff is of the opinion that the proposal being put forward by staff is consistent with the grant program's guiding principles and eligibility requirements and has the potential to significantly improve transportation planning in Electoral Area 'A'. Therefore, staff recommends that the Board approve the requested resolution and direct staff to proceed with submitting an expression of interest.

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Regional District of Nanaimo Board authorizes staff to proceed with submitting an expression of interest to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities for the purpose of applying for funding under the Built Environment and Active Community Planning Grant Program to develop an active transportation plan as part of the Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan review.

**Original Signed By**

Report Writer

**Original Signed By**

Manager Concurrence

**Original Signed By**

General Manager Concurrence

**Original Signed By**

CAO Concurrence

COMMENTS:

**Attachment No. 1**  
**Expression of Interest**  
**Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area 'A'**  
**Active Transportation Plan**

**Context**

The Regional District of Nanaimo is embarking on a review of its Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan. Electoral Area 'A' (The Plan Area) is the unincorporated area within the Regional District of Nanaimo located east of the City of Nanaimo and includes the neighbourhoods of Cedar, South Wellington, Cassidy, and Yellowpoint.

Transportation is of key importance to the community and is of growing concern. The Community is faced with a number of transportation challenges including low density development which is not conducive to frequent transit service, narrow roads and roads with uneven gravel shoulders and open drainage ditches which pose a challenge for non-vehicular modes of transportation, and large separation distances between residential areas and areas where commercial goods and services can be obtained. Public safety is an issue along many roads within the Plan Area and is likely a significant deterrent in using more active forms of transportation.

Our intent is to review/rewrite the existing Official Community Plan in consultation with the community and various other agencies and stakeholder groups to better reflect the needs and desires of the community. One of the desired outcomes is to incorporate an active transportation plan, including an implementation strategy, in consultation with the Ministry of Transportation into the new Official Community Plan.

**Goals**

Our proposal to incorporate an active transportation plan into the new Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan is focused on the following four goals:

1. To identify and evaluate opportunities for improved active transportation networks.
2. To reduce the community's dependence on the automobile and encourage a multi-modal transportation network;
3. To develop policies, design guidelines, and an implementation strategy in the new Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan for creating an environment which supports increased physical activity through community design, policy, and transportation planning; and,
4. To improve public safety.

### Stakeholders and potential partners

We are proposing to approach the following groups and agencies to be involved in the process Electoral Area 'A' residents, the Ministry of Transportation, School District 68, and the North Cedar Improvement District.

### Proposed Activities and Process

| Activity  | Description   |
|---|---|
| Community active transportation assessment      | An assessment of the current active transportation infrastructure and transportation and recreation planning documents in the Plan Area will be conducted. The information will be compiled and a map showing the location of all transportation infrastructure and linkages will be prepared.  |
| Public Consultation                             | The public will be consulted to obtain input on how active transportation should be developed as part of the community including goals, objectives, and policies that work towards achieving that vision.   |
| Formation of Technical Advisory Group           | The Ministry of Transportation, School District 68, North Cedar Improvement District, and Community Members at large, and the Regional District of Nanaimo will get together to discuss strategies for addressing the issues raised by the assessment and public input.   |
| Preparation of draft active transportation plan | A plan will be drafted by a consultant in cooperation with the Technical Advisory Group and will identify existing active transportation infrastructure, designate desirable active transportation infrastructure. The Plan would include design guidelines, suggested Official Community Plan policies, and a strategy for implementation. |
| Plan Review                                     | The plan will be presented to Plan Area Residents in association with the Official Community Plan Review. Amendments may be made in response to community feedback.   |
| Finalize Plan                                   | The Plan will be completed and incorporated into the Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan.  |

### Previous or Existing Regional District of Nanaimo Transportation Plans

The existing Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan contains some general policies on how the Regional District of Nanaimo should encourage alternate forms of transportation and how the Regional District of Nanaimo should work with the Ministry of Transportation to improve road standards. The existing Plan does not include design guidelines, policies to encourage active transportation, or a strategy for implementation.

A number of Community Trail Studies have been completed in Electoral Area 'A' which respond to the vision of a community linked together with trails and paths, as outlined in the Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan.

The Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Parks and Trails Plan identifies major trail connections throughout the region including the Plan Area.

### **Anticipated Budget**

The anticipated budget for this project not including in-kind Regional District of Nanaimo staff time contributions is \$25,000. Funding would be used to hire a consultant to assist in the plan process and development as well as to fund the costs associated with the process such as meeting expenses and advertising.

### **Primary Contact**

For more information on this proposal, please contact Greg Keller, Senior Planner at (250) 390-6510 or toll free at 1-977-607-4111 or email to [gkeller@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:gkeller@rdn.bc.ca).